

MENTAL ILLNESS AND TUBERCULOSIS

There have been times when the high incidence of tuberculosis in mental illness was interpreted to mean that perhaps tuberculosis may cause mental illness, or that mental illness forms a strong predisposition to tuberculosis. In a study in New York, however, it was observed that in a certain county all the patients with newly diagnosed tuberculosis were physicians, nurses, and attendants who worked in the state mental hospital. This study seemed to indicate that in certain state hospitals there are poor hygienic conditions which facilitate the spread of tuberculosis to the personnel as well as to the patients. Since then it has been shown that in certain states such as Florida and New Mexico, where there are mental hospitals run on the open-air principle, the incidence of tuberculosis is no higher than in the average population.

In a very few cases, tuberculosis involving the brain or causing severe anoxemia of the brain may cause mental illness. Also in an individual predisposed toward mental illness, tuberculosis may be the stress which elicits it. As an example, a young woman in the sanatorium at Duarte became tuberculous shortly after her marriage. Her husband sued for annulment on the ground of fraud. The patient became schizophrenic, and before she was transferred to Patton State Hospital, she said that she

had done a terrible thing, that her husband was right: She had actually married him in fraud; although she had not known she had tuberculosis, she had had a plastic operation on her nose which she had kept secret.

Close pointed out that there is no conclusive evidence that electric shock treatment reactivate tuberculosis. Furthermore, Close described a series of patients with active tuberculosis who had rapid, downhill course because mental illness interfered with treatment. All of these patients were helped through shock treatment.

DIET

The influence of emotions on diet and in turn the influence of diet on resistance has been pointed out in one article in which it was reported that fat and green vegetables were lacking in the diet of most persons who contracted tuberculosis. Attempt was made in the article to correlate the dietary deficiency with a specific personality structure.

EXPERIMENTAL WORK

Since neurosis can be produced experimentally in animals, the author looked for, but was unable to find, record of studies on the influence of experimental neurosis on resistance to tuberculosis as well as on the course of the illness.

(A complete bibliography is available from the author.)

Legislation Relating to Tuberculosis Control (Public Schools)

G. G. WETHERILL, M.D., *San Diego*

THE Education Code (1949) of the State of California authorizes county boards of education to require candidates for positions to show evidence of freedom from active tuberculosis. The code reads in part as follows:

"13031.1 *Employment of Certificated Persons.*

"If required by an order of the County Board of Education, he shall also have on file with the county superintendent of schools a certificate from a physician and surgeon licensed under Chapter V of Division 2 of the Business and Professions Code showing that he has submitted to a physical examination within three years last past, including an x-ray of the lungs, and been found free from active tuberculosis."

(Added by Stats. 1947, Ch. 795; amended by Stats. 1949, Ch. 1162.)

"13031.2. In lieu of the certificate from a physician and surgeon required under Section 13031.1,

any person who adheres to the faith or teachings of any well recognized religious sect, denomination, or organization, and in accordance with its creed, tenets, or principles, depends for healing upon prayer in the practice of religion, may file with the county superintendent of schools an affidavit stating such adherence and dependence and that to the best of his knowledge and belief he is free from active tuberculosis, and said affidavit shall be deemed equivalent of such certificate; provided, that if at any time there should be probable cause to believe that such affiant is afflicted with active tuberculosis, he may be excluded from service until the governing board of the employing district is satisfied that he is not so afflicted."

(Added by Stats. 1949, Ch. 1162.)

"*Employees of School Districts Other than Persons Requiring Certification Qualifications.*

"14002.1. No person shall be employed by a school district in a position not requiring certification qualifications which requires him to be in frequent or prolonged contact with pupils until, if

Presented at the annual meeting of the California Tuberculosis and Health Association and the California Trudeau Society, March 30-April 1, 1950, San Diego.

required by an order of a County Board of Education, he has on file with the county superintendent of schools a certificate from a physician and surgeon licensed under Chapter V, of Division 2, of the Business and Professions Code showing that he has submitted to a physical examination within three years last past, including an x-ray of the lungs, and that the results of such examination indicate that he is free of active tuberculosis."

(Added by Stats. 1949, Ch. 287.)

"14002.2. In lieu of the certificate from a physician and surgeon required under section 14002.1, any person who adheres to the faith or teachings of any well recognized religious sect, denomination, or organization, and in accordance with its creed, tenets, or principles, depends for healing upon prayer in the practice of religion, may file with the county superintendent of schools an affidavit stating such adherence and dependence and that to the best of his knowledge and belief he is free from active tuberculosis, and said affidavit shall be deemed equivalent of such certificate; provided, that if at any time there should be probable cause to believe that such affiant is afflicted with active tuberculosis, he may be excluded from service until the governing board of the employing district is satisfied that he is not so afflicted."

(Added by Stats. 1949, Ch. 287; amended by Stats. 1949, Ch. 1162.)

EXPERIENCE IN THE SAN DIEGO CITY SCHOOLS

Chest x-rays have been required for many years as part of third year probationary teacher examinations. This was accepted as a normal and important

part of the evidence that would qualify a teacher for permanency.

More recently, chest x-rays have been required as part of the physical examination of all teacher candidates prior to employment. This, then, provides chest x-rays prior to entrance and again after three years.

It is generally agreed that people working closely with children should have chest x-rays at least every three years. Subscribing to this belief, the San Diego Board of Education made it mandatory for all school employees (certificated and classified) to have chest x-rays every three years.

It was planned that the requirement of the periodic three-year chest x-rays coincide with the Metropolitan Mass Chest X-Ray Survey sponsored by the Department of Public Health. By working closely with the health department and the survey, all school employees had their first periodic chest x-ray. In 1952, all school employees will again have chest x-rays or photofluorographs. This will continue every three years thereafter.

As of October 1, 1949, persons depending upon prayer for healing are exempt from chest x-rays in California (Sections 13031.2 and 14002.2 of the Educational Code). Those claiming exemption on a religious basis were required to sign and have notarized an affidavit of their adherence to the principles upon which claim of exemption is based. About 1 per cent of the school employees signed these affidavits. It is agreed, however, that a member of such faith may be excluded from service if at any time there is probable cause to believe that he is afflicted with active tuberculosis.

825 Union Street.

